High Cost of Solar Lanterns

4036. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' :
MISS FRIDA TOPNO :

Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the high cost of solar lanterns sold in open market proves to be deterrent for average middle class people;

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take to provide such lanterns at affordable prices;

(c) whether such lanterns were distributed under a Government sponsored scheme; if so, when, in which States and at what prices; and

(d) whether Government propose to relaunch this scheme and if so, by when ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI M. KANNAPPAN) : (a) and (b) The initial cost of a solar lantern is higher than conventional devices like hurricane lantern and wick lamp. However, the solar lantern provides much better illumination, is environment friendly and is easy to use and maintain. As no fuel is required a solar lantern can be more economical than a kerosene lantern over the life of the product. The Government has taken several steps to bring down the cost of solar lanterns and make them affordable to people, including :

(i) reduction in customs duties on key materials

(ii) exemptions from excise duty

(iii) expansion of market, leading to increased production and lower costs

(iv) Provision of subsidy to users.

(c) Solar lanterns are being distributed all over the country with subsidy under the Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) Programme of the Ministry

since 1993-94. Some States like Kerala and Andhra Pradesh have also taken initiatives to launch their own schemes relating to distribution of solar lanterns.

The present prices of solar lanterns are in the range of Rs. 3,000—5,000 per unit depending upon the make, model, quantity, place of supply and mode of programme implementation i.e. the tender mode or market mode. For the current year the admissible central subsidy per solar lantern is Rs. 1,300. For the North-Eastern region, including Sikkim, the central subsidy is 90% of the ex-works cost of the solar lantern, subject to a maximum of Rs. 3,000. Some States provide additional subsidy for the solar lanterns.

(d) The scheme is continuing.

Providing subsidy/assistance to private manufacturers of solar lantern

4037. MISS FRIDA TOPNO :
SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' :

Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether manufacturing and marketing of solar lantern is being done exclusively by Government agencies;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) if so, which private agencies are engaged in its manufacturing and marketing;

(d) whether Government provides any subsidy/assistance to such private manufacturers; and

(e) if so, the details of prices of such lantern ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI M. KANNAPPAN) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Government is implementing a countrywide Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) Programme under which different types of SPV system like solar lanterns, home lighting systems, street lighting systems, water pumping systems and power plants are being promoted through central subsidy, soft loan packages and other incentives. The Programme is being implemented through the State